

WASHINGTON. D.C. – House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Darrell Issa (R-CA) today sent a letter to White House Deputy Chief of Staff Jim Messina in response to the state of panic created in New York City by an unannounced April 27, 2009 flyover by an airplane used as Air Force One and two F-16 fighter-bombers. The White House has confirmed that the flyover was conducted for photographic purposes.

“Everything about this blunder is problematic,” said Issa. “Glaring errors of judgment and communication raise serious questions on a number of fronts. Former White House advisor Fran Townsend summed it up concisely when she observed this whole mess is a case of ‘felony stupidity.’”

The non-partisan Congressional Research Service reported in 2007 that the Air Force estimates taxpayer costs of \$56,800 an hour to operate the President’s aircraft. An Air Force spokesperson said the total cost of Monday’s photographic operation for the two F-16s and the VC-25 – the President’s modified 747 aircraft – was \$328,835.

“The President has consistently avowed his desire for openness and transparency,” Issa said. “It is with this in mind that I have asked the White House to account for the who, what, when, where and why of this ill-advised aerial photo-op.”

The full text of the letter is available [here](#) .